

But the smaller islands of Old Providence, accessible only by ferry or small plane, and Ketlina, connected by a bridge, largely escaped the fate of San Andres. The population of both is almost entirely Raizal, and their communities have successfully resisted efforts to bring in big development projects or build military installations there until now.

The islands were hit very hard by Hurricane Iota last November. On Old Providence, hundreds of houses were damaged and hundreds more destroyed completely.

Colombian President Ivan Duque promised to rebuild in 100 days. It has now been 6 months. The next hurricane season is on the horizon, and reconstruction is nowhere near complete.

The delay is partly due to the government's failure to properly consult with those most affected. But what the government did do was allow the Colombian Navy to take advantage of the crisis and build a new dock, a project the community had previously rejected due to the risk of environmental damage.

The navy has installed its dock near a fishermen's co-op whose own dock was destroyed by Iota, cutting off its members' access. In response, fishermen whose livelihoods are at risk have been protesting for 62 days.

There is a profound difference of vision between the islanders and the mainlanders. The Raizal fear that if the government continues to ignore them, their way of life in Old Providence and Ketlina will be overtaken by the mainland population, as has happened in San Andres. That would be a major violation of the human rights of the Raizal people.

In 2004, when the U.N. Special Rapporteur on racism visited the archipelago, the Raizal communities complained of political discrimination and marginalization from the decision-making processes that affected their territory. They also described cultural domination by the mainland, for example, the exclusive use of Spanish as the language of instruction and pressure to convert to Catholicism to be able to advance economically.

More than 15 years later, the Colombian Government persists with many of the same practices that led the Raizal to lodge those human rights complaints.

It is time to change course. It is time to prioritize the human rights of the Raizal people. It is time for the government to recognize the Raizal as legitimate interlocutors and respect their right to protect their ancestral lands.

I urge the Duque government to accelerate reconstruction so that the people have adequate shelter and medical facilities as soon as possible, certainly before the next hurricane season.

I urge the government to stop importing labor from the mainland and, instead, employ local Raizal workers.

I urge the government to remove the navy's new dock, rebuild the co-op's

dock instead, and end further militarization of the islands.

I urge a thorough review of any U.S. Government resources used for post-Iota reconstruction to ensure that they were expended in full compliance with requirements of prior consultation.

And I encourage the United Nations and the Inter-American human rights bodies to immediately review the situation of the Raizal people and issue new recommendations to the Colombian Government to ensure that their rights are fully protected going forward.

#### CELEBRATING GEORGE MILLS' 100TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor George Mills, an extraordinary Alabamian I recently met in Decatur at a Kiwanis pancake breakfast. George is a former World War II prisoner of war and will celebrate his 100th birthday on May 23.

The youngest of eight children, George graduated from Decatur High School in 1939. While in high school, George worked for Western Union, delivering telegrams on his bicycle from 5 to 11 every night. After high school graduation, George sold pianos for Forbes Piano Company.

In 1942, at age 21, George Mills enlisted in the Army and was assigned to Company E, 109th Division under General Omar Bradley, making him a member of one of World War II's best-trained divisions.

Sergeant Mills arrived on Omaha Beach 25 days after D-day. For 7 months, he was in combat and engaged in four major battles, including the Battle of Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, and the battle at the Hurtgen Forest.

After the Hurtgen Forest battle, George and his company were sent to the Germany-Luxembourg border, where, one morning, they were awakened by exploding rockets and artillery. His company was surrounded by 15,000 Axis forces. Despite overwhelming odds, they held their ground for several days.

Eventually, Axis forces blew a hole in the house Mills was sheltered in. Bazookas and flamethrowers followed, setting the entire house on fire. George was injured by shrapnel.

On December 18, 1944, after more than 2 years of service, George was captured by the Germans. After the fight, the Germans flattened the surrounding town, shooting civilians and the mayor.

The Germans interrogated the soldiers before taking them to a German POW camp, where they were fingerprinted, photographed, given dog tags, and registered as prisoners of war. They remained there for 2 days before the Germans segregated the soldiers, sending officers to concentration

camps, forcing privates to work, and sending noncommissioned officers, including George, on a 5-month walk across Europe that broke their souls and their bodies.

George tells many vivid stories of the cold winter, lack of food and sleep, abhorrent treatment by their captors, and the good friends made along the way.

Thankfully, George was liberated on April 14, 1945.

In October 1945, George was discharged and returned to America. After a very long bus ride home, he arrived at his Alabama hometown, where his sister was so excited to see him that she forgot to unlatch the screen door and his faithful bulldog nearly broke down the door to get to him.

Four years later, George and his wife, Charlie, were married. They enjoyed 66 years of marriage before Charlie passed away in December 2015.

In 1983, George retired but stayed busy, traveling with his wife across America, Canada, and Europe, while looking up George's Army buddies along the way.

One of George's proudest moments came on November 16, 2006, when France's President named George Mills a Chevalier for his gallantry during the liberation of France.

Vigorous as ever, George is involved in the Military Order of the Purple Heart, The American Legion, the VFW, the Masonic Lodge, the Kiwanis Club, and several other community organizations.

He is a frequent speaker at several local high schools, community organizations, and church groups. A true southern gentleman, he is a beloved representative of America's Greatest Generation.

Mr. Speaker, George Mills' exemplary service to America and his local community is emblematic of what makes America a great nation.

I wish George Mills the very best as he and his family celebrate his 100th birthday.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF THOMAS HESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of my incredible friend, Tom Hess, a beloved resident of Northville, Michigan, who we lost last month after a courageous battle with cancer at the age of 76.

Tom was born in Detroit in the summer of 1944 to Raymond and Jessie Hess.

After graduating from Michigan State University in 1966, he joined the United States Army, where he attended Infantry Officer Candidate School. He went on to complete all the training necessary to become a Green Beret and proudly served his country as a first lieutenant during the Vietnam war. This was something that Tom was

deeply proud of, his service to the country.

Upon his honorable discharge from the Army, Tom returned to Detroit, where he graduated from Wayne State University Law School and was admitted to both the Michigan and Florida Bar Associations. He became the managing partner of a law firm in Daytona Beach and had many exciting real estate ventures in Florida before moving back to metro Detroit in 1990 to establish his own firm, where he practiced for another 18 years.

Tom married his exceptional wife, Janet, in 1991. Together, they opened their hearts and their home in Northville to members of our community on countless occasions.

This was the stuff that the Democrats of Western Wayne County are made of, and it is what raised me as a young candidate for Congress to propel me into office.

Their generosity was boundless and their ability to connect people endless. It is something that we will remember for all of time, in their home, in downtown Northville, that looked as if it was built in the 1800s but was actually built by Tom himself.

With his generous spirit and political acumen, Tom was a tireless advocate for the causes closest to his heart. He cared very deeply about the work being done in this Chamber, and he was focused on efforts to make our democracy more fair, strong, and inclusive for generations to come.

During my final visit to Mr. Hess, when I got the opportunity to say good-bye to him—because in classic Tom Hess fashion, he insisted, as he lay in hospice, on having an open, living wake—he looked me in the eye and said to me that his ultimate wish, his dying wish, was to see H.R. 1, the For the People Act, signed into law.

He was passionately committed to ensuring the success of our democracy, and he recognized the historic opportunity we have before us right now to bring our elections into the 21st century and to ensure that everyone has the right to vote. He looked me in the eye and said: I ask you to tell your colleagues on both sides of the aisle, but most penetratingly, the other side of the aisle, to join you in getting H.R. 1 done.

Now, we know we have taken the H.R. 1 vote in this Chamber, and it is going to the Senate. So I send the message from Northville, Michigan, as any good representative of their constituents would do: Pass H.R. 1 now. Send this to the President's desk for his signature.

Tom showed us a life well-lived. For if cleanliness and perfection of home is godliness, that was Tom and Janet.

The Wall Street Journal in August 2020, just last year, reflecting on the hobbies that people were taking up in the pandemic, shared stories about people building model trains in the bottom of their homes, and that was something that Tom already had in his home. He

had this model train station that we would, during the pandemic, go down and look at. He disassembled it and gave it to a museum before he passed away. So, he beat the pandemic trend.

We know that Tom is survived by his loving wife of 29 years, Janet Hess; his children, his son, Raymond, and his beloved granddaughter, Hazel; his in-laws; many nieces and nephews; and extended family members throughout Michigan and Indiana.

The family pays tribute to Angela Hospice, providers who I had the chance to meet when I was visiting with Tom, for their tireless work and dedication to the people in the most sacred time in their life, and, of course, the VA hospital in Ann Arbor, which Tom loved so dearly.

I thank my colleagues for joining me and recognizing my beloved constituent, Tom Hess.

□ 1030

#### HONORING MEN AND WOMEN OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise during National Police Week to honor the men and women of the law enforcement community and to condemn the ongoing attacks of those members of our law enforcement community.

In particular, to Wisconsin's law enforcement community, I say: Thank you.

The past year has been particularly tough on our law enforcement officers. Just outside the State Capitol of Wisconsin in Madison is the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Memorial.

Last year, this memorial was vandalized. A criminal took a sledgehammer to the granite, which is etched with the names of the men and women who died in the line of duty protecting our communities.

Last week, six more heroes had their names added to the law enforcement memorial, but the ceremony was interrupted by antipolice protestors. During the prayer, protestors yelled that the deaths of these officers, whose names were being etched into the memorial, were not a sacrifice.

Antipolice protestors held up signs with hateful words and disrupted a solemn ceremony with vile chants. It was disgusting to see the absolute lack of respect and the display of hatred and complete ignorance.

Contrary to the antipolice protestors at the ceremony, these officers are heroes. They died protecting us. They died protecting our communities.

Let me tell you about just one of them. Officer John Hetland was one of the names added to the Wisconsin memorial this year. He was a 24-year veteran of the Racine Police Department. Officer Hetland was a hero. He made a commitment to serve and protect our communities, whether on or off duty.

When a local business was being robbed at gunpoint, Officer Hetland attempted to stop the suspect. Officer Hetland was murdered. He was shot in the chest by this criminal. He died protecting our community.

We have seen antipolice rhetoric go too far. After riots broke out in Kenosha, officers from Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, Rock, Waukesha, and Milwaukee Counties and across the State of Wisconsin put their lives on the line to defend Kenosha and protect the people in our communities.

I will never forget hearing those same vulgar chants when criminals attacked officers in the streets of Kenosha. As fires were being set throughout the city, I remember watching officers duck as Molotov cocktails were being thrown at them, as water bottles filled with concrete were being thrown at them and hurled in their direction. Even as an officer was struck in the head by a brick and knocked unconscious, the criminals cheered. That is unbelievable. That is heartbreaking.

Violence towards our police officers is something our Nation cannot tolerate. We should collectively speak out against the attacks on our police and against the calls to defund the police. We should be supporting our men and women in law enforcement.

To the members of the law enforcement community, I want you to know this: The people of Wisconsin's First Congressional District say: Thank you; thank you for keeping us safe.

#### REJECT THE INSULAR CASES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, today, the House is holding a hearing on the insular cases, doctrines which hold the territories in a perpetual state of colonialism.

Earlier this year, I served as a House impeachment manager in the second trial of President Donald Trump. My presence on the floor of the U.S. Senate carried a great deal of meaning for me. It also said a lot about America.

Although I was making the case, I was unable to actually cast a vote in the House. My constituents in the Virgin Islands, U.S. citizens, remain unable to vote for President, lack any voice in the Senate, and have only a limited vote in the House.

The second-class treatment of the territories is not just unfair; it is un-American. More than 3.5 million Americans are denied the right to vote simply because of where they live, whether it is Puerto Rico; Guam; Northern Mariana Islands; American Samoa; or my home, the Virgin Islands of the United States. This number of people is equivalent to the population of the five smallest States combined, and each of the territories send more men and women to the military per capita than any State.